

E P P O N I N A : K

A

D R A M A T I C E S S A Y .

ADDRESSED to the LADIES.

Ἡ μῆνοι φιλείσ' ἀλόχους μερόπων ἀνθρώπων
 Ατρεΐδαι ; ἐπεὶ ὅστις ἀνὴρ ἀγαθὸς καὶ ἐχέφρων,
 Τὴν αὐτῇ φιλείει καὶ κηδεταί.

HOMER'S Iliad, B. 9.

Are fair endowments, and a beauteous face,
 Belov'd by none but those of Atreus' race ?
 The wife, whom choice and passion both approve,
 Sure every wise and worthy man will love.

POPE'S Translation.

L O N D O N :

Printed by S. CHANDLER, for the AUTHOR;

A N D

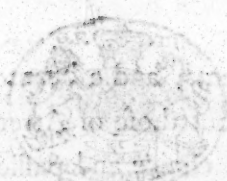
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REPORT

DRAMATIC

APPENDIX



LONDON

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Prologue and Epilogue tacked to this performance, with the division into acts, may serve to inform the reader, that it was written at a time of life, when the author knew so little of theatrical matters, as to imagine it might be represented on the English stage. At present he knows better; and submits it, as it is, with all its want of contrivance, and sameness of style, to the indulgence of the impartial public, who, it is hoped, will find nothing in it, which virtue and innocence cannot pardon. It is therefore addressed to **THE LADIES**, whom the author will be proud to acknowledge as much superior to **Eponina**, in every moment of their lives, as they will certainly be in the last. That fatal extravagance of Roman magnanimity may be admired, but must be condemned.

SUBSTANCE of what is related by PLUTARCH,
DIO CASSIUS, and TACITUS, concerning EPPONINA,
as it is collected by the AUTHORS of
the Universal History, vol. xv. p. 33.

VESPASIAN being consul the ninth time, and Titus the seventh, Julius Sabinus, who had stirred up the Gauls, and caused himself to be proclaimed Cæsar, was at length discovered, seized, and put to death. After his defeat, he had fled to his country dwelling, and set it on fire, in order to raise a report that he had perished: And truly he was there believed to have suffered a voluntary death; but, in the mean time, lay concealed with his treasures (for he was immensely rich) in a cave, which he had caused to be dug in a solitary place; and which was known only to two of his feedmen, upon whose fidelity he could depend. He might have easily withdrawn into Germany, but could not prevail upon himself to abandon his * wife, whom he tenderly loved. Sabinus, that no one might doubt of his death, did not for some time even undeceive his wife; who solemnized his exequies with great pomp, bewailed him with many tears, and at last, no longer able to bear the loss of an husband whom she so tenderly loved, resolved not to out-live him, and began to abstain from all food. Hereupon Sabinus, by means of Martialis, one of his freedmen, informed her, that he was still alive; and acquainted her with the place where he lay concealed; warning her at the same time to suppress her joy, lest the secret might be thence betrayed. Empona, tho' in the utmost transports of joy, continued to bewail him as dead; but, in the mean time, passed great part of the night with him, and sometimes whole weeks, pretending business in the country. She had even two chil-

* She is called by Dio Cassius, Peponilla; by Tacitus, Epponina; and by Plutarch, Empona; which name, according to that writer, in the ancient language of the Gauls, signified an heroine.

dren by him, who were born and brought up in the cave. She concealed the whole with exemplary fidelity, and wonderful address; nay, she found means even to convey him to Rome, upon what motive we know not, and from thence back to his cave, so well disguised, that he was by no one known.

But, after he had passed nine years in this condition, he was at length discovered by some persons, who narrowly watched his wife, upon her frequently absenting herself from her own house, and followed her to the cave, without being discovered. Sabinus was immediately seized and sent to Rome, loaded with chains, together with his wife, who, throwing herself at the emperor's feet, and presenting to him her two tender children, strove with her tears and intreaties to move him to compassion. Vespasian could not forbear weeping at so moving an object; but nevertheless condemned both her, and her husband, and caused them to be soon after executed.

P R O L O G U E.

In the Character of the AUTHOR.

WHAT prose-man can conceive a poet's curse?
(Save, great Apollo, all good men from verse!)
Insulted, courted, hurt a hundred ways,
Provok'd with censure, worse provok'd with praise!

My wife grew pert ere yet one act was full;
"Indeed, my dear, of late you're wondrous dull;
"The time has been, like other wedded folks,
"You had a many matrimonial jokes.
"What say'st thou, deary, in thy own defence?"

I bore with her, (she's but so so for sense)
Wrote on, and ended. Next I long'd to see
Some critic, who wou'd praise my work and me.

Monilla took it up, laid down her cards,
(Monilla's frowns have kill'd some twenty bards)

"Oh! Sir, unnat'ral, wild, outrè, absurd!
"The judges will condemn you, take my word."

On a reviewer I presum'd to wait,
Bow'd, scrap'd, and begg'd to speak one word with fate,
"Great Sir, this work is mine; when dress'd up neat
"In gilded coat, 'twill drop down at your feet.
"Here's five and threepence—may I hope your favour?
"You may depend on dutiful behaviour.
"I've made besides two riddles and a rebus;
"Do call me, pray Sir, call me son of Phæbus."

He turn'd his nose up, I began to quake,
"Young man, said he, I fancy you mistake.

"I'm not for you—no critic to be lett
"For such a trifle—that's another sett.
"I'm, thank this brow, establish'd years ago,
"And would not deal with my own father so.

To Doctor Gamma I made bold to speak,
He hemm'd, "Come near me, understand you Greek?"

"I fear, my friend, your head's an empty bottle—
"Come, construe me a chapter—Aristotle!"

'Tis now so very long since I left school,
Alas, Sir,——"Ay, alas, Sir, you're a fool."

A soft-ey'd son of milk, so kind and good,
 Always to say what you would hope he shou'd,
 Next turn'd my leaves : " 'Tis fine, exceeding fine !

" Here's Pope and Newton here in every line !

" Your work will do an honour to the land !

" I'm much oblig'd" — Yes, Sir, I understand !

A starting man of taste, so nicely strung,

That, if you fillip'd, soul and body rung,

Begun a page, but soon he flung away :

" Sir, I abhor you, and I hate your play."

Bread, Sir, said I, 'tis cold, and ~~toast~~ and ale —

" Learn to make op'ras then ; they're things for sale."

What ? bid me drop all rational pretences !

Abjure my conscience ! give away my senses !

I cannot scrawl cantatas *blithe* and gay,

But must amuse myself in my own way.

Shou'd ye, dread circles, here before my eyes,

(Great as ye are, and fair, and good, and wise)

Conjure me for the future to refrain, —

Tho' ye should bid me, ye would bid in vain.

'Tis in the blood, I fear, and hapless I

Am doom'd to scribble till the day I die.

Provoke me not, by your neglect, to write

A Satire : 'tis but pen and ink, and spite.

No ; save my dialogues, and ye shall hear

Your own sweet praises sounding in your ear.

I'll take a ton of beauty, sense, and wit,

And you—and you—and you—and you shall have a bit.

[To the boxes, pit, and galleries.]

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

M E N.

VESPASIAN, emperor of Rome.

TRITARIUS, a lieutenant, } employed by VESPASIAN
BILETTUS, } to discover SABINUS:
PUTUS, }

SABINUS, }
LENTUS, } Conspirators.
RIBLIUS, }

CLEOMISUS, a Cynic moralist, formerly preceptor to
SABINUS.

MARTIAL, }
DAMA, } Freedmen of SABINUS.

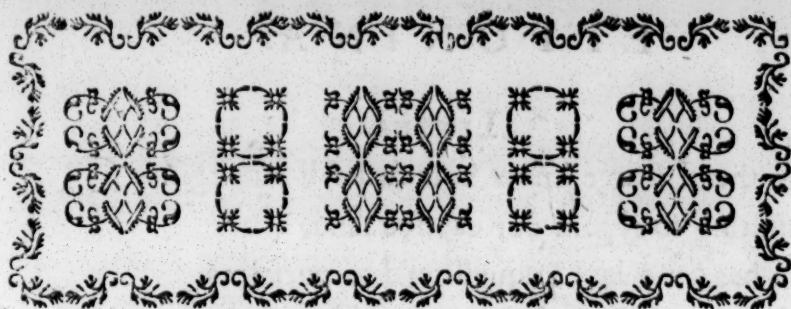
BONELLUS, a soldier.

W O M E N.

EPPONINA.

SABERA, an orphan, her niece.

SCENE. Before the ruins of SABINUS's house, in the
Lingones.



EPPONINA.

ACT I. SCENE I.

SABINUS, LENTUS, RIBLIUS, and other Conspirators. MARTIAL, DAMA.

SABINUS.

 F prudence still can doubt me, prove me more !
Try if the sternest tyrant can deter me ;
Expose me to an upstart's insolence,
Where dangers, deaths, and cruelties range round me :
If there my struggles may but screen my country,
I'll rush on all, and be believ'd the man
You say Sabinus was !

RIBLIUS.

Plague on such doubting ! hither reach thy hand !
I am thy brother, since thou art a rebel ;
I am thy soldier ; for thou art Sabinus !——
Such weak-tongued caution and security
Provokes me, Lentus !

B

LENTUS.

He that I scarce know how first fell amongst us
Consulting to regain our captive land,
Who has been late unquestion'd as ourselves
For hearty willingness——

RIBLIUS.

In moving on
The minds of discontent to drive before it
King, laws, and avarice, he whom we nam'd
Agellius, is assuredly Sabinus.

LENTUS.

I am convinc'd —— but difficulties rise
Of other sort.——

SABINUS.

The crown hangs tottering on Vespasian's head,
Ready to drop. —— What would we more? One jolt,
If giv'n with spirit, will shake it off.

LENTUS.

I fear we hardly shall effect our aim
With him you talk'd of, Titus; win him o'er,
The work wou'd be half done.

RIBLIUS.

Win him! he's rightly moulded to an hair
For our own purpose. But the other day
('Tis told abroad by all) the people groan'd
Beneath the weight of taxes; Titus heard,
And push'd the matter so as scarce to keep
A filial awe, “ what kings will credit this?
“ Rome's sordid monarch sets a tax on urine! ”

LENTUS.

But end the narrative. Vespasian then
Bid the nice boy, with his fine nose, go smell
The pieces levied thus — mere prate of babes !
This tax of mine produces gold as pure,
As 'twere upon a lady's eyes ! — At this
The youth was hush'd ; for knew he not full well
The finest metal fill'd his father's coffers ?

RIBLIUS.

To cut thee short, the people hate Vespasian ;
There's not a poor plebeian has a clod
Sufficient to support an ear of corn,
But fears the King will squeeze the moisture out,
For royal use ! at every breath of wind,
That howleth keen and hollow in the grove,
He starts and fears Vespasian's band be near,
To scare the farthings from his close-ty'd pocket !

SABINUS.

Ev'n now in swarms they fill the fields beneath us.
But glad their hearts with offers of protection,
And in one moment sure as death they rise,
And lay oppression low. Their words are murmurs,
Their murmurs curses.——

LENTUS.

A man may murmur, who wou'd hardly spend
His blood to set surviving sons at ease.——
Our cause demands, but has not yet obtain'd
The help it wants. Once wou'd they dare, in earnest,
To shrink with us, and leave this load behind

Extortion bends our backs with ; soon as said,
That and the crown wou'd tumble down together.

SABINUS.

'Tis not a flash that soon will fly to air ;
They seem resolv'd on reaching him !

RIBLIUS.

And that they will, for sooner people part
With aught than money. Rob the simple maid
Of her virginity, that very hour
She will forgive you, the next day forget you.
Tear virtue from him, scarce a man looks round,
But if you pinch him in so fore a place
As where his money lies, he smites the hand
That gall'd him there.

LENTUS.

But yet this people thou'rt so big with, still
Tell a new tale when a new minute comes ;
Soon warm'd with patriotism, soon cold with care !
To make my meaning better understood,
Attend an incident of t'other Day.
'Tis wond'rous odd ! but two or three big words,
That come from the thumbs ends of orators,
Will work and swell the populace to swear
Out roundly, ere another hour be gone,
They'll do they know not what. The pow'r of noise
So strangely sways !——

RIBLIUS.

To hem this incident of thine about
With sentences, demands too much our Time.
Spare then thy string of maxims, and proceed.

LENTUS.

Ye knew Poplicola. His father's tomb
Was late beset with this same list'ning crowd,
That gapes for golden dreams of ancient days.
Not thus, he told them, Romans brook'd of old
To be the dupes of one another. Once
A free-born mind bore ill to be a slave :
But times and things turn strangely round, and now
Vespasian chains us down on the hard earth,
Less blest than beasts, allow'd to bite their chains.—
He fir'd their hearts with freedom's empty fame,
Till one and all threw up their caps to cry
For a new monarch less unmerciful.
But here they fail'd, the hasty orator
Forget to tell them their new ruler's name.
Howe'er, it shews that tho' they soon are set
A madding, scarce they know their own request.

RIBLIUS.

No, sayst thou ? Their request is liberty,
A gift no slave can give them, no Vespasian :
He is a slave, slave of himself, a slave
Of money, slave of sand, of brass, of dirt !—

SABINUS.

Why waste we words ? Quick ! let us hence, and each,
As suits him best, go foster ev'ry spark
Of freedom's sacred flame !

LENTUS.

Agreed !—

[*Exeunt.*]



S C E N E II.

MARTIAL, DAMA.

MARTIAL.

Oh ! Dama, can that day become to thee
 Or me indifferent ? think it o'er again,
 'Twill be impossible to change thy mind.
 My friends, Sabinus said, (and eager then
 We press'd to hear) the fates decree my fall.
 ('Twas on this very spot where now we stand)
 You see, said he, Sabinus in despair,
 Who thought to rule with clemency at Rome.
 This moment tyranny, with hasty step,
 Strides on to seek me out.——I name no more
 The crime of those, who fled the fight, and left
 Me helpless. Far the greatest part shall feel
 What torments cowards in success impose.——
 Suff'ring they must believe their death a debt,
 And must repent. —— But let not me enhance
 A victor's guilt, nor swell his thirsty soul
 With blood, I boast, deriv'd from Cæsar's veins.
 Sooner than fall as my forefather fell,
 Pierc'd through with murd'ers wounds and wanton sneers,
 Behold this hand, my own, shall do the deed,
 That leaves great Julius' line extinct and lost !
 What thanks are not your due, my friends ! no more

May I repeat what benefits I owe
To your fidelity ! Farewell !—— With that
He dropt a tear and said again, farewell !——

DAMA.

Then when the slaves were all dismiss'd, and none
But we remain'd behind ; he thus began.
From you long found, ere yet I made you free,
Inflexible to ill, I nought conceal :
When e'er I wou'd resolve to leave this world,
My heart upbraids me with the wife I love ;
Swells and defies me to abandon her.
Soon might the midst of Gaul have kept me safe
From foes, had Epponina too been there.
I cou'd not that. Revenge and death are here.
Yet must I live to love. We three alone,
(And nam'd us with himself) we only know
The cave beneath my villa, that might keep
A man from harm. There will I hide my head.
Do ye report me dead. Destroy my house.
Let Epponina's weeds declare the widow.
None but will trust it. Some will call me rash,
And blame me for so desperate a deed ;
While some may rank me in the roll of names,
When Rome holds up her VARUSES to view.——
In you fidelity shall dwell, and time
May bring me back to life and liberty.——

MARTIAL.

That morn may rise ere long, and we be blest.
Thou hop'st for this thyself : how cou'dst thou then
Not care one moment for thy lord ?

DAMA.

I will think better.—See! Tritarius comes!
 Why is he here so frequently? [Exeunt.]



S C E N E III.

TRITARIUS, BILETTUS.

TRITARIUS.

It is her custom, by that lonely beech,
 Or near yon tow'ring oaks that prop the skies,
 To wander thoughtful.—
 There stood, there fell the house, some paces off,
 Where once content and peace, and pleasure dwelt. —
 Virtue was glad when plenty was her friend,
 And none deny'd but Fate and Jove were just.
 Sabinus liv'd within those mould'ring walls,
 A blissful guest, till that strange wish arose
 That idly bade him bid adieu to joy,
 And seek for greater happiness than home.
 How much mistaken he! — this desolation
 To me, a soldier, aptly does declare
 How fickle is the goddess we adjure.
 Inconstant fortune! how thy smiles betray!
 Fain wouldst thou mock me too! —
 But why abjure her aid? or why complain?
 If Epponina ever deign to hear

E P P O N I N A.

9

My vows so often breath'd to Heav'n for her,
I'll boast my lot aloud. ———

BILETTUS.

And why not hope she will? ——— not yet despair:
First boldly venture on the breach, and then
Declare it dangerous! ———
'Tis not impossible, you yet may gain
Admittance into Epponina's heart.

TRITARIUS.

First prove it not impossible to gain
Admittance to her converse.

BILETTUS.

How easy this! in love as well as war
All stratagems are lawful. To elude
Her prudence, were the first safe step to lay.

TRITARIUS.

I pray thee now proceed.

BILETTUS.

Whenever Epponina takes the air
Young Sabera attends, and hears her talk;
But not so hears as to forget the forms
That pass her Eye.
I've seen her hunt thee with such eager look,
As would have fix'd me firmly on the spot;
Whilst thou regarded her with angry mein,
As if she serv'd but to block up the way
To Epponina's Eyes.

C

TRITARIUS.

True, I disdain the conquest, nor endure
Such calling glances. Epponina's air
Speaks her a beauty hardly meant for man ;
Her heav'nly modesty forbids me more
Than all the pride of all the sex in one.
Yet were she mine——

BILETTUS.

To make her first thy friend, improve thy pow'r
With soft young Sabera. Pretend to feel
The flame she strives to kindle : tell her all
That lovers tell ; their common cant run o'er ;
Soon shalt thou be a welcome visiter
In Epponina's dwelling. Slow degrees
May bring thee up to that far distant bliss,
Thou dar'st not hope for yet. This simple tale
Improve, and prosper to thy heart's content.

TRITARIUS.

She hardly will refuse to let me see
Young Sabera, I own. A lesson far
From difficult, were what it teaches true !
Farewell ! I go to sit beneath the shrubs,
And muse upon my passion.—— [Exit.

BILETTUS.

And I go hence, but on another errand, [Exit.



S C E N E IV.

SABINUS, LENTUS, RIBLIUS.

SABINUS.

To this small band so bent on death or conquest,
 Might many more be added. Far and near
 Alike, both high and low, abhor his rule,
 Worn out and weary'd of his rig'rous laws,
 As is the slave condemn'd to wipe the sweat,
 With his sharp elbow, from his greasy brow
 Of bondage. — What, if Titus shou'd be nam'd
 As fit for empire? All the realm adores him. —
 And what if Riblius take this hint, and sound
 If there be depth enough of discontent
 To bear rebellion to the heart of Rome?

LENTUS.

A man most fit! He'll run so smoothly on,
 Snuffing the scent of stratagem, and steal
 So unperceiv'd in ent'ring ev'ry breast! —
 First let hot-headed Ajax scour along
 The frightened plain, tear up the trembling trees,
 Lay waste the harmless flocks that meet him mad,
 Roll up whole rocks, and down the mountains hurl
 Huge stones ten hundred weight, to storm the waves:
 Then let him cheat his simple enemy
 Into an ambuscade! — If ever this

Was done in Homer's dreams, let Riblius now
Turn politician !

SABINUS.

Still must we hesitate ?

RIBLIUS.

'Tis true, the youth that bellows out like me,
And carries his soul staring from his forehead,
Can ne'er be he, that fathoms deep th' abyfs
Of human dispositions !——

LENTUS.

A lying look, insinuating tongue,
The counterfeited mein of deep concern,
What villains prosper with, wou'd do us good,

SABINUS.

But not the cool dark cunning that prevails
In Minds more ripe by time, is half so fit
To kindle the quench'd flames of liberty
As Riblius' sprightly temper, unesteem'd
For penetration, or pretence to wisdom !
I've seen him chear the dull unheeding herd
With e'en one lively look, and in an instant
Dispense his feelings all around the circle.
The dead indiff'rence of the land, that seems
Scarce to enquire who laid its head so low,
Or whose the heel that spurs its smarting sides,
Will, at the fire that burns in Riblius' breast,
Recover into rage, and curse Vespasian.
Then will they, in an interval of sense,
Find out 'tis they themselves that set up kings

For their own use. Then will they storm again,
Much wond'ring who cou'd sleep, and never see
Himself a slave!

~~~~~

## S C E N E V.

*Enter* CLEOMISUS.

CLEOMISUS.

So, I suppose, in this your serious meeting,  
The weal of families, the way to wealth  
Is deeply prob'd! Or, may be love's strong beams  
Dart warm in Riblius's bosom, and dispel  
His understanding!

RIBLIUS.

Truly, Philosopher, a weightier cause  
Engages our concern, the weal of Rome;  
Which, while things go as now, can hardly be.

CLEOMISUS.

Things go as now? speak out the matter plain,  
And fear not that offending courts or kings  
Can ruffle me.

RIBLIUS.

'Twou'd be to little end to fear at all.  
When e'er the people plod thro' thick and thin,  
Bearing their prince to mountains made of gold,  
While they that labour thus to glut his bags

Feel cold and hunger, shame and nakedness,  
 And only earn his hatred; need they fear  
 To grumble out their curse can bring a greater?  
 Vespasian, aided by a woman's wit,  
 Plots daily some new method to exact,  
 And mourns the hour that does not make a wretch.  
 He boils the very marrow from our bones,  
 To oil the creaking wheels of avarice.

CLEOMISUS.

And what's to be inferr'd from this harrangue?

SABINUS.

That we must lose no time to wrench the scepter  
 From out the hand that handles it amiss,  
 Alarm the people, rouse the native warmth  
 That sets them on their feet, and bid them hew  
 Their way to yon thick-wall'd close-guarded palace;  
 There drag the Tyrant from his heaps of earth,  
 And shew the bad they never can be safe!  
 Then take good care none fill the empty throne,  
 'Till some more mod'rate man be found to merit  
 The honours of the majesty of Rome!

CLEOMISUS.

'Till some one, equally unfortunate  
 With this devoted King, be pointed out,  
 To bear the curse of empire!—much, mean while,  
 Your scheme must thin the citizens of Rome,  
 Who will not certainly be all alike  
 Precipitate, to shed Vespasian's blood,

But rather spill their own to guard their king.  
Such ever was the case. Ah ! do not dream  
That ye combin'd to bring such change about,  
Can make all men ye meet of the same mind.  
Perhaps ye patriots, turning upside down  
The government and laws, yourselves may fall  
The first, and lose that life ye mean to mend.

RIBLIUS.

Who heeds for that ? Alas ! what's life and health,  
That but for being more the dupes of state  
Makes us alive and well ?

CLEOMISUS.

Ye, like the rest, must long to seek abroad  
For what is only in your own conceit ;  
Set up a phantom, waste your blood and peace,  
To seize it in your Arms ! how vain the toil !  
For nothing is but nothing ! cou'd men learn  
This one short maxim, 'twere impossible  
To buy so dear the privilege to be  
Just what they were before. To change at all,  
Is but to change from bad to bad at best.  
The Gods in equal balance weigh mankind ;  
Each has his bitter draught of life and woe  
To swallow down ; and little does it boot  
To think variety will sweeten it.——  
The letter'd Roman, deck'd with all the spoils  
Of Britons, bravely falling in the fight,



May blaze his actions in the glare of day,  
And for a moment be believ'd a Jove:  
But in his truthful closet oft he owns,  
When conscience mows his mighty wonders down,  
Himself is a barbarian and a slave.—  
Like is the Lot, as reas'ning sages say,  
Of fool, and wise, and wit, and grave, and gay;  
Learn'd or unlearn'd (the maxim alters not)  
High on a throne, or humble in a cot. [Exit.

## RIBLIUS.

While this philosopher run his long round  
Of vain reflexion, all my brain was full  
Of insurrections, and resisting tyrants.  
I'm blest! Sabinus is on earth to hear  
Our brave intentions, and outdo them all!  
While he's our head, and one warm drop remains  
Of blood to spill, one mind shall move our arms! [Exeunt.





## A C T II.

## S C E N E I.

TRITARIUS, SABERA.

TRITARIUS.

**H**E who in battle has receiv'd a wound,  
 That bids so fair to sever flesh and spirit,  
 May boldly bid the dagger do its worst!  
 He rushing fearless on to meet his foe,  
 Defies or open rage or ambuscade.  
 O Sabera! I well must mind the day,  
 That hapless moment ever hangs upon me,  
 When from yon distant window, I beheld  
 Thee pass almost alone. Thy dignity  
 Was greater than the empresses that shine  
 Amid the jewell'd madams of their train.

SABERA.

Such praise o'erwhelms me.

TRITARIUS.

The morning 'twas, and when I saw thy face,  
 Methought if any fight cou'd be bestow'd  
 By Jove, more grateful to the rising world

D

Than the bright lamp of light succeeding sleep,  
'Twas by that light to gaze upon the charms  
Of Sabera!

But not to seek for similes (a search  
I ne'er shall much succeed' in) such you seem'd,  
That other loves, by Cupid's wrath I swore,  
Shou'd ne'er again beguile me of a wish.—  
Oft on this plain since that I've seen thy face;  
As oft the dart sinks deeper in my soul.  
Yet still determin'd to pursue my pain,  
See! here I venture to behold these eyes  
That deal but my disquiet! See me beg  
Another other look!—That lovely form,  
So killing, so agreeable!

SABERA.

In all your haunts found you no other maid  
Agreeable as I?—

TRITARIUS.

No, though I wander'd from the burning shore  
Of sandy Afric to the freezing north,  
Exploring all the space that lies between;  
Cou'd any object strike th' enquiring eye  
Agreeable as you.

SABERA.

What is it then to be agreeable,  
Since something different from beautiful?  
I fain wou'd learn the myst'ries you relate.



Is this agreeable, a thing desirable?  
Is it a word of praise, since 'tis not beauty?

TRITARIUS.

In other women 'tis but seldom found,  
That to be fair, and be agreeable,  
Are quite the same. Oft-times a man may see  
Nymphs from a window, crane a gloting head  
Most beautiful, but yet of no more pow'r  
To move his heart, than has the waving nod  
Of silver lilly bending to the breeze.  
But then in thee (tho' Helen's heav'nly form  
Gave but a dark idea of thy brightness)  
Thy features strike with such a graceful air,  
The sharpest pain becomes the sweetest pleasure.

SABERA.

Helen was——

TRITARIUS.

As much inferior, Sabera, to thee,  
As thou art fairer than the nymphs of Gaul.

SABERA.

What Helen?

TRITARIUS.

A Helen, that were long ago forgot,  
Cou'd Greece have boasted in that age of wonders  
To see a Sabera!  
But cease a moment, condescending fair,

With such civility of questioning,  
To tempt me to neglect mine embassy.

SABERA.

You came on such a frothy light affair,  
A little loofely flying wind may puff  
The bus'ness from your brain ! To talk of love  
Wou'd cross the purpose of your visit here !

TRITARIUS.

Ah ! cruel beauty, know'st thou not full well  
I long to talk of love, to tell a tale  
Oft fram'd, and modell'd oft anew ? Nor think,  
Tho' I have brav'd the face of warring camps,  
At least since sixteen summers fled mine eyes,  
That I adventur'd all at once, to come  
On this dread enterprize of pleading love.  
To mitigate my pain, night after night  
I tofs'd to find a thought, which soon as found,  
Was lost in labr'inths of despair and doubt.

SABERA.

Was it so terrible a task to speak ?  
Cou'd any thing be formidable here ?  
Are you a soldier, and afraid to tell  
A poor weak feeble woman what you think ?

TRITARIUS.

I am a soldier, yet unus'd to start  
At aught in foreign or domestic war.  
As little do I scruple to declare  
My free opinion on a vulgar theme.

But cou'd I utter what I feel this moment ?  
Hope hid her head. Uncertainty's dead weight  
Still heavier heap'd upon my burthen'd soul,  
On ev'ry fresh occasion, more and more  
Forbade th' attempt. Reason decry'd my flame,  
While I obey'd not. Spite of op'ning wounds  
I rush on harm, despising all that's past.

## SABERA.

You who have seen the mischief rashness makes,  
A Vet'ran, whom experience's rough hand  
Has often rubb'd, do you decline to learn  
That 'tis but prudence to forbear the fight,  
Where we were worsted once ? Explain me this,  
Or prove that love is contradiction all !

## TRITARIUS.

Madam, in war cool wisdom is neglected.  
Heedless we recollect that we were beaten.  
The faint rememb'rance serves but to excite  
Our yet recluser courage, and to send  
More vig'rous bosoms to the bed of fame.  
Not that I mention this, as if I meant  
To point out something similar in love.  
Love's a peculiar frenzy, made of fondness,  
A strange disease delighting to convert  
Our food, our abstinence to feed itself.  
Let but a man be heartily in love,  
He seeks not half so much to be at ease,  
As to increase his pain.—



SABERA.

'Twere cruel then to turn an eye on lovers——

TRITARIUS.

Yet might, O Sabera ! that cruel eye  
Bestow some other influence than neglect,  
Which but inflames me more.  
Oh ! be propitious ! as despair and death,  
So life and love are given by a look.

SABERA.

Hard-hearted were the doctor that deny'd  
A potion giv'n at such an easy rate.  
If twenty looks can set thy soul at ease,  
Perhaps thy labour may not last an age.  
But think not (if so soon I condescend  
To hear, and stop the torrent of complaint)  
That Sabera will drop into thy arms.  
I mean but to approve myself the donor  
Of what you sue for.——A look of pity——  
A maiden can no more.——

*[Smiles, and turns away affectedly.]*

TRITARIUS.

So soon ! if Sabera must cease so soon to smile  
On him that lives but——

SABERA.

Beware, lest Epponina overhear !  
She quickly may be near, and quickly give  
This over-warmth of yours another name

Than love of me. All other exclamations  
 Long time has she abhorr'd, save such as breathe  
 The fervency of virtue. She disdains  
 The pets and rantings of a childish passion.

TRITARIUS.

Ah! Epponina!—

[*Aside.*]

SABERA.

I own I have observ'd a stranger hang  
 Upon my footsteps, as I gain'd the hill,  
 Above these bushes in an ev'ning walk.  
 His prying eye look'd eager to discern  
 Something in his own praise. A glance or so  
 Had satisfy'd him. Epponina fear'd  
 Herself had been the object of his—

TRITARIUS.

Love.

SABERA.

And hence has quite forsook the former haunts  
 We two together us'd : she sends me there  
 Defenceless and alone. Her walk of late  
 Rarely exceeds the oak.—  
 I do confess I am not made of marble,  
 Nor bred, as love-struck songsters like to say,  
 By bears or tygers, in a savage desert.  
 I was not hewn from rocks or naked walls,  
 Nor bear to see a miserable man  
 Made so for Sabera.—If you are he—

TRITARIUS.

O might I be permitted now and then  
To see this oak, and tread this little plain,  
Sacred to virtue !——

SABERA.

But what were near as well, perhaps you might  
In that same grove, where Sabera you saw,  
See her again—alone—nay,—not content ?

TRITARIUS.

I thank thee Sabera, for such supposes,  
And do not pause, as if I need to fear  
The fates cou'd wrong me, after such supposes ;——  
But secrecy is still the soul of love.

SABERA.

And are not groves and tufts of silent trees  
(Save were the breeze excites the plaint of leaves)  
Companions, think'st thou, that can keep a secret ?  
Did e'er you hear of limes or shady elms,  
That had betray'd a lover ? Oft is told  
How such and such hemm'd in in hopeless love,  
Utter'd the sad Complaining of their Soul  
To vales and thickets, as they wou'd conjure  
Them well to mark the vows of lasting truth  
Committed to their keeping. Never, I think,  
In other wise was shrub or tree invoc'd.



## TRITARIUS.

Nature, in all her vegetative pow'r,  
Is faithful to the passion, I submit.  
But what if underneath those knotty shrubs  
Lurk some ill-fated maiden of Threescore,  
Longing t'expose the bliss of happier youth,  
To envious jeers of suff'rers like herself?  
Much wou'd she hug herself to hear us prate  
What sober years approve not! oh! to make  
Those joys ridiculous she cannot taste,  
Were an employ for envy's holiday!  
If near this little path I might repeat  
My fears and hopes and doubts and vows of love,  
How happy!

## SABERA.

How little do you ponder words like these!  
Have you not heard of Epponina's virtue,  
Held up a pattern for surviving wives?  
How she abandon'd but to hopes of Heav'n  
Contemns all meaner ties than virtue lends?  
Far from her haunts and farther from her ears,  
She forces back presumptuous sounds of love.  
'Tis strange, she comes not to correct vain wishes.  
Behold!

[EPPONINA *crosseth the Stage*

## SABERA.

Your eyes were not your own! you will make good  
Your words!

E

TRITARIUS.

That Woman's virtue!——

SABERA.

In one short moment darkens all the charms  
That shone so late in Sabera!——

But Sabera's her own.——

Yet have you said you knew not what! You said  
You lov'd!

TRITARIUS, [*looking still after Epponina.*]

Merit that has no rival!

That that shou'd feel misfortune's heartless fangs!

SABERA.

Who wander thus may love! for me they may!

TRITARIUS.

The dead continuance of a formal tale,  
Just in the self-same key kept drawling on  
Exact to reach the point; is that for those  
Whom Cupid, raving boy, dull reason's foe  
Has visited? He ever leaves behind  
A share of his own heedlessness.——  
Ev'n like the doting ninety winters bring  
Is the wild narrative of wand'ring love!  
How tedious, how obscure becomes the youth  
Recounting the long dream of what he sees  
Plain in his fair one's face, of what he feels  
Deep-printed in his bosom to her praise!  
Whoe'er he be wou'd speak his passions out,

He gropes with difficulty the dark way,  
And widely staggers on a distant subject !

SABERA.

But knows he not his wand'ring to defend,  
And that the shortest way ?  
Then sticks he to the point ! begin or end,  
The story's still the same !—Not ev'n his eyes  
Directed in full blaze at Epponina——

TRITARIUS.

Not all my efforts panting for success  
Can fasten falsehood on my tongue again !  
Oh Heav'ns ! how cou'd ye cruelly refuse  
Your benefits elsewhere ?

[*Aside.*

SABERA.

'Twas like a spendthrift truly to bestow  
It's darling favours all at once on one,  
On Epponina !

TRITARIUS.

Save, Sabera, my peace, nor name so lightly  
The virtuous injur'd Epponina !

SABERA.

The virtuous, beauteous Epponina !

[*Exit.*

TRITARIUS, *Solus.*

To be a lover, a pretended lover,  
To her one hates, this is no common talent !  
Methought I better cou'd have play'd my part,  
But as it was, she certainly perceiv'd,



Spite of her easiness ; and after all  
 My flatt'ring and protesting, what I aim'd at !——  
 If hoping for thee in despair itself,  
 If sighing long unheard can ever earn thee,  
 If loving thee alone, tho' at the risque  
 Of shame and vengeance, if there's aught in danger,  
 In folly or distress of mind that moves thee ;  
 Sure, Epponina, I may plead my passion !——  
 Deceit, that most I hate, has been employ'd ;  
 Its coward schemes have I embrac'd for thee !

~~~~~

S C E N E II.

*Enter EPPONINA, looking at TRITARIUS with
some degree of curiosity.*

If as thy other virtues, thy compassion,
 O Epponina ! far exceeds the share
 That any other mortal has to boast,
 To my distress thou hardly wilt deny——

EPPONINA.

Did such appearance correspond with pain,
 Or did thy look bespeak thyself to be
 'The wretch the languor of thy speech wou'd make ;
 Thou cou'd'st not beg in vain so small a boon.
 As pity's aid. But when with muffled eyes
 Compassion gads abroad, she carries home
 'The misery she thought to mourn elsewhere.

TRITARIUS.

Appearance (sure I need not here affirm)
Is a deceitful method to adjudge
Of happiness or woe. The wise avoid
The glaring hue of what is mere outside,
Nor center bliss in shew. Bliss ever dwells
Within mens minds, and never sees the sun.

EPPONINA.

No error there ! long have I learnt where once
Affliction borrows the dull aid of black,
A thousand thousand times lives lightsome joy,
That mocks the dancing of the sportive breeze,
Rev'ling secure in horror's fable shade !

TRITARIUS.

Ah ! wou'd'st thou hear me ! cou'd I hope for help !
To pour my sorrows out——Alas ! I love !——

EPPONINA.

Love whom? love what?

TRITARIUS.²

Oh ! Erponina ! —

[EPPONINA *exit.*

Decorative separator line

S C E N E III.

SABERA, EPPONINA *returns.*

[Tritarius *exit.*

SABERA.

Knew I the villainous intent you blame?
So unsuspected and so artfully

He pleaded the subduing pow'r of love,
 And said, I know not what mean while of me,
 With such emphatic fiction, for my life
 I cou'd not but compassionate a man
 Of person so well turn'd!——A tongue he has
 (If 'tis his tongue) might move, perhaps, the heart
 Of a more solemn fair——Fond Sabera
 Mayn't be the only woman in the world
 To welcome such a suitor.——Yes; he had——
 But to what end t'excuse, approve, or blame
 His visit? why recount a traitor's talk?

EPPONINA.

Astonishing! the Gods can yet send down
 Such toys of troubles! she, who rode the storm
 Of fortune's swelling seas, when ev'ry wave
 Gap'd to be gorg'd with death, may well endure
 The paltry torrent of a summer's show'r;
 The poor unmeaning pertness that pretends
 To love a woman forrowing with Sabinus!

SABERA.

Already past the twilight of a doubt,
 Tritarius loves you! Certain as you are
 Tritarius loves you, yet his adoration
 Is mere misfortune!

EPPONINA.

No great misfortune! Not so soon love's fire
 Aspires to rise so vehement in flame!
 Like boiling self-beguiling youth he claims
 Guilt not his own, and cannot be in earnest.

SABERA.

Did but that earnest flame to me belong—
But death and furies dwell upon his tongue! [*Exeunt.*]



A C T III.

S C E N E I.

EPPONINA, CLEOMISUS.

CLEOMISUS.

'TIS empty noise—no more—that mortals tell
Of wealth, of honour, and the rest they prate of!
Ne'er since I knew what gewgaws move mens hearts,
And what a poor thin bladder, puff'd with wind,
Ambition is, have I admir'd the changes,
Day after day, and minute after minute,
In frolic brings about! There's a long list
Of Alexanders, Cæsars, and the rest
Renown'd for making elbow room on earth.
Of these Sabinus ever talk'd, as having heard
How poets praise the dust they raise. He said——

EPPONINA.

He said (what well might warm his gen'rous blood)
He saw Rome's standard torn in civil fury,
And that he cou'd no longer sit so tame,
A looker on, amid the wanton freaks

Of madmen. While, with great contentedness,
 They trod down others, cou'd he be at quiet?
 He reckon'd heav'ns! he reckon'd many a street
 That flow'd of late with blood of senators!
 And greatly fear'd that Otho, or Vitellius,
 When on the imperial seat, wou'd fill the land
 With what it well remembers.—

Name not his rightful claim of Cæsar's grandson—
 A nobler pride than Cæsar's urg'd him on
 To save dominion from the bloody hands
 Of such as sport with pow'r—

CLEOMISUS.

Mayhap to turn away another's hand,
 And grasp it in his own. He might pretend,
 That virtue call'd him to defend her cause;
 That he foresaw proscription wou'd return,
 Some other Anthony and Lepidus,
 (And who is he that was more fortunate)
 Some other league might form to fright the world.
 These, while united, trod compassion down,
 And spilt our blood for sport.
 But truly he, good man, must melt with pity,
 Must rage with brav'ry at the thought!—
 Whene'er the ambitious make a firm resolve
 T'o'erleap the bounds of sober life, they find
 Excuse upon excuse to justify it.
 Twenty fine arguments seem mighty apt,
 And cred'lous youth and women will believe.
 Ev'n from his earliest infancy in vain
 He heard the dictates of philosophy;
 In vain I set this whirling earthly ball

Of gold and cares and revelry, before him ;
He learn'd but to neglect, and when a boy
Thought to be great was to be blest !

EPPONINA.

Sabinus wou'd not, cou'd not be unknown.
His noble spirit was an evening's talk,
Long ere he blest me with his wedded arms.
For there are nice observers always out,
On search to see quite thro' the hearts of men ;
Who spy the hermit, hidden in his cell,
And trace out every character that flies
The noon-tide beam of ostentation.—
Yes ; young Sabinus bore, within his breast,
The seeds of virtue, felt the springs of glory,
That wake the hero on a fit occasion ;
But such as never call ambition out,
With or without a cause, to wade in blood.

CLEOMISUS.

With much good reason to ten thousand saws,
Has woman given birth ! but be thyself.
When young Sabinus woo'd thee years ago,
Tho' he might seem, you said, all rural love,
As if made up in some sequester'd vale
To bless a wife with peace and quietness ;
But yet when we two talk'd the matter close,
And I advis'd thee to take special care
Not to believe too much when lovers lie ;
Didst thou not doubt he wou'd, in days to come,
Prove a perpetual husband ?

EPPONINA.

Ye Gods ! did ever Epponina fear
 Sabinus' merit shou'd escape the den
 Of dull obscurity ! who will may start,
 And dread the light'ning of heroic deeds ;
 Yet shall the active mind, that soars above
 A vulgar fate, still compass my esteem.
 To sooth the labours of th' advent'rous man
 Is an ambition worthy of a woman.
 Nor is there in the bounds of warring Gaul
 A maid, that does not from her soul despise
 The tinsel youth that shudders at a shadow.

CLEOMISUS.

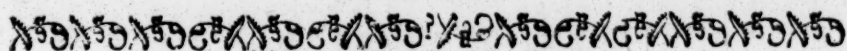
Though thou, long tutor'd to condemn the world,
 Shou'd'st lightly plead for pomp and wasting war,
 I scarce cou'd wonder. Form and fashion still
 Fill up the void within a female eye.
 Praise she the calm obscure unenvy'd life,
 The secret graces that the wise adore ;
 But one short minute does the lesson last :
 At the first breath of praise comes rushing in
 The woman ; soon philosophy must fly
 To males and closets ; soon she quits her cot,
 And longs to see her shadow in the sun !

[Two men appear at a distance ready to engage.]

EPPONINA.

What mean yon stragglers ? up and down they run.
 But chief these two ! what can—see ! see ! they fight
 No doubt fell malice in their bosoms long

Pent up, breaks out. It fires their eyes! their arms
Move like the ministers of fate!



S C E N E II.

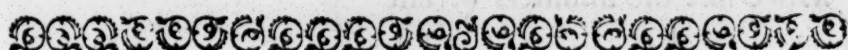
The two Soldiers. [They fight, one falls.

BONELLUS, *first Soldier.*

'Tis o'er! I've pierc'd thy heart! go tell the shades
Of thy companions how this hand has serv'd
The state! I've suck'd myself the bottom sweets
Of vengeance!—Thou—'twas thou didst basely join
With others to beguile my father from me,
Nine years ago, and make him like thyself,
A traitor. But he cou'd not, base as thou,
Deck'd in the glitter of deceit, do mischief.
I had a friend. I saw thee steal behind,
And plunge thy cursed weapon in his neck.
Now be at peace! thy honey-tongue lies still,
And I forgive thee—rest!—thy coward's work,
Thy tricks are done! I've dragg'd thee from thyself,
And made thee brave. Before thou cou'd'st not thus
Have dy'd as men die.—But I'll bare thy breast.

*[Prepares to strip him, looks steadily, pauses, and proceeds to
take off his garments, fixes his eyes and cries out*

Oh! Heavens! my father! *[Drops down on the body.*



S C E N E III.

CLEOMISUS, EPPONINA.

CLEOMISUS.

See ! how successfully, in all degrees,
 They murder one another !
 The victims of their folly ! vengeful earthworms !——
 'Tis like they too might dream of curbing kings,
 Wretches, that fell beneath all character !

Enter BILETTUS.

BILETTUS.

Since my most early youth was taught t'esteem
 Each female virtue, here I must admire
 That mild complying prudence, that restrains
 The flow of knowledge, while its pattern bends
 Submissively to man. [*To EPPONINA.*
 Your worth is eccho'd from the tongue of fame,
 And I am happy here to see the sage
 The world is full of.— [*To CLEOMISUS.*

CLEOMISUS.

The tongue of fame !—Stranger, I am not made
 Of such materials as ply and bend
 This way and that, with every wind that stirs !
 Those who do that may hear the world commend,
 And eccho back the praise they first bestow'd.—

I live unknown to fame, nor answer thee
In thy glib strain!——

EPPONINA.

To listen while the stranger tells his tale,
Were barely hospitable.—Open ears
Are as refreshing oft as open doors.——

CLEOMISUS.

'Tis true, the tale may be of such a sort
As hospitable woman entertains.——
But be not hospitable overmuch.——

The words that please are seldom words of truth. [*Exit.*]

BILETTUS.

Beginning now to bend beneath the weight
Of cares, not winters, 'tis my constant aim
To seek' out the recesses of the good.
Where live the men that prop up virtue's beams,
That ere now reach'd a hand to help the state;
Where piety resides and altars blaze
To Jove's high majesty, 'tis there I mix;
And as I can the spirits of those wou'd cheer,
That sink in undeserv'd calamity.——
Ere since Sabinus gave the life away
He thought no longer worth a Hero's wish;
Has Epponina mourn'd in such a sort
As may abash the brow of boastful man.——
Instead of idle tears, in plenty shed,
May be when real grief is far to seek;
She from the splendor of the world retir'd,
And in the dignity of silence, thought
Her sorrows over.——

EPPONINA.

Cou'd I have told the bitter woes I bore,
 How musing on the days and weeks and years,
 Thought after thought of comfort still went out,
 When hope had wander'd from my widow'd breast
 To seek Sabinus in a better world ;
 Wou'd not my words have egg'd an idle tongue
 To speak in wanton pity, and affirm
 My woeful case of most peculiar cast ?

BILETTUS.

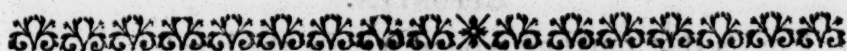
Indeed there are that ever and anon
 Disport themselves with cook'd-up characters
 Of feigning wives.
 Speak but the gen'ral praises of the sex,
 Or point out one bright star that strikes the sight
 With rays resistless ; from th'envom'd eye
 Of some rude wit, unconscious of her worth,
 A look will gad abroad, which fain wou'd say
 A woman's virtue is but affectation :
 For when Astroëa fled this impious earth
 To warm her heart with pure divinity,
 She left not chastity to shiver here !——
 But Epponina is above the mocks
 Of mad profaneness, as above the flights
 Of common virtue.—Envy'd were the lord
 Of such perfection, did he still enjoy
 Its brightness ; nor had been for ever robb'd,
 Robb'd by his own rash hand of thee !

EPPONINA.

Envy's that rankling wound within the breast
That rages most when most 'tis fill'd with glory.
But the domestic blandishments of wedlock,
Are these the virtues that invoke fell envy?
Long as Sabinus cast his cares on me,
I lov'd him fondly, but I lov'd in quiet.
Think not I sought at feasts to varnish o'er
My plain contenting province. To myself
I honour'd him. Close to itself my heart
Clasp'd my affection for him.—

BILETTUS.

Nay, 'tis not that the pious matrons meet
To set their own perfections out to shew.
When, in Sabinus' great forefather's days,
Mad Clodius basely ventur'd to behold
The chaste assembly at their awful rites;
Confounded with the heav'nly mysteries,
The dreadful glory damp'd his enterprize.
He stood astonish'd at his strange intent,
And found th' unhallow'd passion die away.—
Thus when the children, as they play, repeat
Each privilege giv'n by discerning Gods
T'evince the worth of woman, but deny'd
To less deserving man; the end of all
Becomes the praise of thee.—But cou'd I learn
From Epponina's lips what chances came
To her Sabinus, such recital were
Most welcome to mine ears, attentive still
To deeds like his, and suff'rings such as thine.



S C E N E IV.

Enter BONELLUS looking wild.

BONELLUS.

This is the bus'ness—let him rise again—
 What clouds? dust flies.—Poison him?—beware!
 I'll strip thee bare, audacious breast! be gone!
 Hell nods.—The Stygian waves come rolling on,
 Yes, yes, to drown him.—Ha! take care! my father!
 Come on! I'll rend thy heart out, slave, that dar'st
 Disturb his peace.—Blood! streams of blood! O Gods!
 Blood covers me! I sink—ye furies, hold! let go!
 Ye tear my entrails!—what none near?—I'll write.
 Base rebels! were ye not?—Burst your own veins!—
 Fine fields of glory! let me bear away
 All opposition!—Murder! hideous! hold!
 Heav'ns! keep him off! my father! Oh! my father!
 My murder'd father!—weak unrighteous Gods!
 Permit ye parricide? I'll rend your skies;
 I'll pull down your divinity at once!—
 Let this decree go out to all the land—

[Writes with his finger upon his leg.]

EPPONINA.

What said'st thou?

BONELLUS.

I am a king.

41

Of whom? of what?

Of Rome, of Romans.—

EPPONINA.

Here Epponina may indeed behold
A wretch ! Heav'n fave us as we are !
Sabinus ! I am blest !

Sabinus was a foldier. Bring him near.
I am no villain—hold ! keep the valiant off !
Sabinus did not—he was brave——

[*Exit.*

S C E N E V.

EPONINA, BILETTUS.

Some hapless remnant of a battle ! left
To rave in deadly pain ! He's wounded and bereft
Of reason.—When I shall soon relate, [*forgets herself*.
To my Sabinus, how a dying soldier,
Made mad with loss of blood, repeats his name,
'Twill call his martial feats afresh before him.
He'll talk of incidents most strange to me,

G

But such as ev'ry battle brings——
He mov'd me much !

B I L E T T U S.

'Twere happy, trust me, to console thy sorrows.
Who brings thee comfort brings himself a blessing.
Good days may come. An ancient prophecy
Heard long ago, but long unthought-of, came
With sudden weight, and fill'd up all my mind
As here I came——

E P P O N I N A.

I noted him—departing—soon he turn'd
And kindled at the name. He knew, alas !
Sabinus cou'd not cruelty.——

B I L E T T U S.

Couch'd in the veil of an ambiguous word
Are still the counsels granted of the Gods.
O be it soon accomplish'd ! thus it runs ;
“ When madmen shall be kings and make decrees,
“ No one of Lingo's ancient line shall mourn.”

E P P O N I N A.

Th' inexplicable oracle of old
Led Cyrus to his loss. He saw not where
Jove stretch'd the hand.——

B I L E T T U S.

The Gods are good. If mortals ever err'd,
Interpreting their dictates to their harm,
'Twas of themselves.—The righteous shall lie down,
At last, in rest. All hail! approaching bliss !——

I long to hear thee, long to bear a part,
And muse with pleasure on thy sorrows past.

EPPONINA.

No longer then the fame of my deserts
Already fills the land; the children lip
My praise no more; the cry of ev'ry corner
No longer ecchoes Epponina's merit!—

BILETTUS.

Ah! task me not, I pray, divinest fair,
With rude forgetfulness of my own words.
Fear not in me to find the subtle trade
That does deceive itself—

EPPONINA.

But yet perhaps 'tis hard to be a villain.
A man had need be wary of his words,
Who acts a part assum'd.

BILETTUS.

Let others err in labyrinths of guile;
Diffimulation never dwelt in me.—
'Twould little boot me vainly to pretend
Myself a son of wisdom. All I ask
Is to adore the Goddess in her temple.—
No base design—

EPPONINA.

Talk'd I of a design? I check myself.
Designs against me wou'd be thrown away.
What can I lose, who bore Sabinus' loss?
What after him lament? These solemn robes,

That spread the face of sorrow to the day,
 May yet be worn, but nothing new can come
 To wound a bosom proof against mishap!——
 The Gods forbade him vict'ry, nor restrain'd
 Troops that ev'n left their leader!——Name Sabinus
 Cross'd in his aim, and raging at his fate;
 And that is grief in earnest!—'Twas for him
 Hard-grasping agony did wring my spirit,
 As 'twere to leave no drop of hope behind.——
 Yet let me own that many a pleasing tongue
 Has sounded in my ear Sabinus' fall.
 How when the love he bore me seem'd to make
 His steady soul give way, and think of safety
 By fond obscurity, a moment's absence
 From Epponina steel'd that hero o'er
 With adamantine bravery, and cloth'd
 His wavering heart with folds of resolution.
 Death he had brav'd before in many a form,
 And scorn'd to bend to misery or misfortune.
 He, like a Roman, fear'd alone dishonour,
 And, plunging his own ponyard in his breast,
 Cut out the way to fame.——Oh! there's a charm
 In heroism that bids me curse my sex!
 Love's but the second passion in my soul!

BILLETTUS.

Yet had that second passion well conceal'd
 Sabinus in retirement, had he fled
 The haunts of tyranny. It cou'd not be——
 Since the great cause he did so well adopt
 Was fall'n, his active mind impell'd him on
 To barter life for fame.——

And yet 'twas told he liv'd some weeks, nay, months,
Beyond the date report assign'd him.

EPPONINA.

Then had I not so deeply drank of sorrow.
Later my soul had fought within herself
For comfort there. Later I'd walk'd about
To pore upon earth's surface, and deplore
An husband, husband ravish'd from mine eyes.——

BILETTUS.

A thousand things had happen'd to recount,
We may suppose. 'Tis probable some slave
Had, for the hopes of fee, betray'd his Lord,
But that another gen'rously preferr'd
The wicked inuendo that he gave.
For villains in all heights and depths of life
Meet unexpected honesty to thwart 'em.
Perhaps within the hollow of a vault
We might believe this faithful slave wou'd hide
His master in distress. Thus had but fate
Determin'd, Epponina's happy eyes
Had stol'n a feast, oft-times, in dead of night;
And, while in broken slumbers others dreamt
Of tumults, grandeur, battles, blood and money,
Had taught Sabinus to condemn them all!
For who that ever drank bliss conjugal,
But must despise whatever else is vaunted,
Under the name of joy.—Mean while these weeds,
A splendid house consum'd, report of slaves
Had stifled all the doubts about his death.——
Right warrantable, truly, such deceit,
That sav'd Sabinus to be blest with thee!

EPPONINA.

Whence, stranger, was it found in human things
 Such chances come to pass? or, can'st thou think
 A gallant foldier wou'd endure to breathe
 Inglorious, undeserving, and forgot
 In honour's paths, all for the silly hope
 Of, once a fortnight in the gloom of midnight,
 Stealing the tender folly of a wife?
 Wou'd he, who more than others might aspire
 To be the master of imperial Rome,
 Stoop down to enter tenant in a cave;
 And coop'd in fix on seven yards of darknes
 Prefer his blind recess to fame and manhood?

BILETTUS.

But greatness may not always blaze alike,
 Nor dazzle vulgar eyes. Old records tell
 How mighty warriors, who had long been borne
 On the high shoulders of esteem, came down;
 Who, after battles won and realms reduc'd,
 Were fain to hug the pity of the poor.—
 'Tis not for thee to wonder how the brave
 May bear at last in homely peace to muse
 On triumphs past.—

EPPONINA.

Ah! little is the wisdom woman boasts!
 The scanty portion I have got of knowledge
 Was taught me by a most severe instructor.
 Bitter experience gave me all my insight.
 Calamity has shewn what may be borne.

BILETTUS.

Liv'd then Sabinus ? Did his woes inform ?
His love, his fortitude, did they declare
What Epponina's virtue can endure ?

EPPONINA.

Did not his garb, his mien, his talk declare
That nothing need be fear'd, I might suspect
These questions carry treachery in their aim.
Who know men's ways, they say, suspect deceit.
But let some untaught infant start aside
At fancy's terrors ! — Do the Gods deceive us ?
“ No one of Lingo's ancient line shall mourn.” —
Sincerity is surely found with men too —
And if she is, she dwells with gravity. — *[aside.]*
Oh ! stranger, wou'd'st thou tempt me to unfold
My woes, my comforts ? How my heart expands
At my Sabinus' name ? 'Tis wond'rous hard
To hide the flame, that struggles hard for vent !

BILETTUS.

Who suffer virtuous, undeserving mourn
Oppression, Cruelty, unhappy love ;
Who steal the just, the conjugal embrace ;
Who fear the flying minutes carry death,
And that all eyes look injury on them ;
The virtuous they, that do all this and more,
May talk to Gods. For heav'n vouchsafes to hear
The steady patriot, and the constant wife.

EPPONINA.

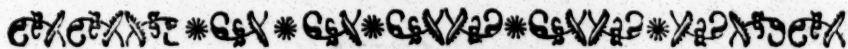
Yes ; constancy ! I yet may call thee mine !
 Speak dread who wills it ! Let Sabinus own
 That he has found fidelity in woman
 Extatic joy must thrill thro' all my frame,
 And soon I must forget I am unhappy !

BILETTUS.

Yet did that virtue ever bloom unseen.
 You, Epponina, never hung around
 An husband's neck to fill a neighbour's eye.
 You never told the gossips where there dwells
 The most endearing wife ! —

EPPONINA.

Let night, let darkness, let the gloomy cave,
 And yet the heav'nly cave that held Sabinus,
 Be witness how unfeign'd — Let Martial own —



S C E N E VI.

Enter CLEOMISUS. *Exit* BILETTUS.

CLEOMISUS.

The sound of these last words that strike mine ear
 Proclaim thee what I fear'd, unfit to stand
 A few soft speeches ! He has prais'd thine eyes,
 Thy Lips and Cheeks and Constancy ; and thou
 In fatal gratitude hast told him all ! —
 Curst he or she, whose too too easy ear

The poison of a flatt'ring tongue pervades !
 Oh ! Woman ! Woman ! this dissolving art
 Melts down the virtuous hardness of thy heart !
 The subtle nimble specious speaker still
 Steals all thou hast, and makes thee what he will !

[*Exeunt.*]



A C T IV.

S C E N E I.

TRITARIUS, SABERA.

SABERA.

THE tongue of silly woman ever works
 Her own undoing ! But it was but feign'd !
 Diffimulation all ! Gods ! cou'd I say
 I lov'd, if thus neglected, thus contemn'd ?

TRITARIUS.

If in good earnest you forgave my passion,
 Or ev'n for fiction that was fram'd for me,
 I own my obligation. Who, to oblige,
 Dissemble kindness, merit this return.

SABERA.

Furies ! dissemble ! and oblig'd for that !
 Slighted ! intolerable ! thus to wrong me !

H

Curse on such forwardness ! Mad foolish word !
 Thus coolly to insult me ! Did thine eyes
 Or ears discover so much love at once ?
 Or burnt the flame so fiercely in my breast,
 That not thy dull civility could quench it ?

TRITARIUS.

Who thought of this ?

SABERA.

No thought of Sabera at all ! The words
 That flow'd so lib'ral in my praise, what were they
 But specious poison ! Live but in my eyes !
 Be gone deceit ! — — —
 Of all the murderers most subtle he,
 Who with a sigh that seems so like sincere
 Loves at a distance ! Long and long he gazes ;
 While the poor virgin (ere he vend his tale
 Half-eat with passion) falls an easy prey
 To his so long-expected first false vow !
 Sure of the heart he hardly once did ask
 The tyrant sporting with a maiden's pain,
 Pretends to wonder both at love and blame !——
 But as I argue thus, I mock myself——
 Curse on such wantonness of cruelty !
 My soul expands with vengeance —— and so soon !
 Gods ! was it hard to lie for one short hour ?

TRITARIUS.

A woman's anger wou'd confound the courage
 Of twenty Cæsars ! madness 'twere in me —— [going:

SABERA.

Stay! Speak!

TRITARIUS.

A bus'ness I am enter'd on demands
My absence and attention. —

SABERA.

So very soon? A minute hardly can
Defraud your mighty bus'ness of its due.

TRITARIUS.

My bus'ness is the bus'ness of the state.
Neglect in matters of such high import
Wou'd be neglects of moment. —

SABERA.

And are you certain 'twou'd be wasting time
To mention here the bus'ness of the state?

TRITARIUS.

Ah! no; it is not that I hoard up time
So carefully! Far other cause denies
To mention here the bus'ness of the state.
I cou'd not—no, I cou'd not, spite of all
Thy rage, forget humanity —

SABERA.

Humanity!

TRITARIUS.

I cou'd not hurt thee.

SABERA.

I know not what this means.

TRITARIUS.

The bargain'd occupation of my thoughts
May give the greater pain—I meant no more.

SABERA.

Myfterious !

TRITARIUS.

What was at firft almoft my choice is now
Necelfity.

I muft take pains to merit——

SABERA.

What ?

TRITARIUS.

Ignominy.

SABERA.

I am diftracted !—fpeak—with plainnefs !—fwear
It is not Epponina's face employs
Thy care.

TRITARIUS.

It may——

SABERA.

It may be what it will—but be not that !

TRITARIUS.

A purpofe much more fatal, that no tongue
Can make the bare recital of be borne.

SABERA.

Another purpofe ? no ; I dread to hear it !——
Name it, and Sabera will be thy Friend.

TRITARIUS.

In this, she cannot.

SABERA.

She can assist a ——

TRITARIUS.

A soldier's purpose, is to fight the battles
Of injur'd right, to shield the harmless hind,
To fix the diadem, as the laws decree,
To quell sedition, and to punish it.

SABERA.

In some of these, a female hand might help
To do a deed Vespasian wou'd approve. ——
With such an open face, — I see him now ——
With such an open face Sabinus talk'd :
Look in his eyes, and you beheld his heart. ——
But yet I can ——

TRITARIUS.

Not plunge a poison'd dagger in thy soul,
Reverse the bounties of thy milder sex,
Break thro' the ties of blood, the sacred laws
Of hospitality, smite, stab the hand
That held thee up, endure the heavy curse
Of vengeance Epponina's wrongs will bring ! —

SABERA.

Ay; there it smarts ! a fearful thing t'incur
The dread ill will of Epponina !

TRITARIUS.

'Tis true, the virtuous dart a glory round,

Confounding low resolves of guilt and gain!
 You've seen the harden'd rabble of the street
 Turn pale, and feel the frowning of the good.

SABERA.

And did you never feel in your own breast
 That beauty join'd with virtue does still more?

TRITARIUS.

I know not what I've felt nor what I feel —
 The Time is pressing ———

[going.

SABERA.

Die all the woman for a moment in me! —
 I gueſſ'd your purpoſe, and alas! prepar'd
 To help you — hear me — do not go — Take this.
 What may be read within — may ruin me. ———
 When all is o'er, O ſtill if you forget
 The hand that help'd you to this fatal tale,
 The willing heart that mov'd th'unwilling hand —
 Oh! if you do forget me after all ———

TRITARIUS.

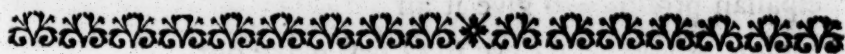
I will remember.

[goes aſide.

SABERA.

Farewell! — Perhaps a thouſand thouſand curſes
 Shall pay me for this deed! ah! if he be
 Unlike himſelf — But I'll not reckon illſ
 Before their day! — Poor fooliſh fluttering heart!
 Beat! quiver on! for thou haſt pierc'd the peace
 Of Epponina. ——— Oh! forgive, forgive me!
 Alas! Sabinus! — But be ſtill! be ſtill!

Events important by important means
Are brought about.—Time, hide me in thy womb,
And close mine eyes up from the guilt I see ! [Exit.



S C E N E II.

*Enter BILETTUS, and PUTUS employed by VESPA-
SIAN to apprehend SABINUS.*

BILETTUS.

Tritarius stands and looks like those who know
They can be useful, and intend to be ;
But tell us by their looks they grudge it.

PUTUS.

I fear me all the services of him
Will hardly fill a memorandum-book.
And yet he means to mount above the heads
Of common mortals —

TRITARIUS *interrupting him.*

Of common villains.

BILETTUS.

'Twill be the making of us all.
Rome's master gave the word, and promises,
With regal bounty, to reward the deed.
So if strict scrutiny can bring about
The thing we wish, I trust 'twill not be wanting.

PUTUS.

Attention is but due to such a matter.
 One hundred thousand sesterces !
 Vespasian promises to give it all
 To him, whose happy eye shall first make out
 The traitor in his den. 'Twill be well earn'd ;
 For justice to no purpose has pursu'd him
 Year after year.—But if when all is done
 He perish'd, as reported, in the flames,
 And mingled with the ashes of his dwelling ;
 Or, if he, to depart more like a man,
 Fell on his pointed sword, there were an end :
 Deeds and rewards were over all at once.

BILETTUS.

Did I not mention Epponina's words ?
 How that she almost plainly brought about
 His ambushment ? Nay, but there came a man,
 Who puff'd out rage on me, and what I said,
 As hating all things but sincerity ;
 'Tis past a doubt, that I had heard the whole.

TRITARIUS.

A widow such as Epponina seems
 How can one know for certain what to make of ?
 For when a woman's blood begins to boil,
 And you awaken her past joys to life ;
 She may forget herself so far to talk,
 As if things past were present. This I say
 Not as what surely was, but as what might
 Be Epponina's case ; and stand excus'd.
 Zeal may not always hit the mark it aims at.

BILETTUS.

What not distinguish from the wild uproar
Of over-heated brain, the simple tale
Of Truth? I am no child nor dotard.
Some little I have seen of human kind,
And think I know when mortals wake or sleep!

TRITARIUS.

So very warm! More days and things than we;
We grant you've seen. But yet allow, mistakes
May not be quite worn out. Tho' young in years
I'm sure of one thing, that the wisest err.

BILETTUS.

What? err in stumbling on a traitor's den,
And then discovering——

TRITARIUS.

No, but in crediting a woman's tongue.——
People in firm possession of their wish
Coolly enjoy it. They that hope or mourn
Their bliss, are apter to exceed themselves.
Cou'd virtuous calm contented Epponina
Betray her husband for a speech like thine,
That was at best a half-begotten lie?

BILETTUS.

And so you mightily approve the scheme
Of rebels skulking out of sight of law!
Oh! how unmerciful! to see unmov'd
Dragg'd to just Rome's worst punishment a man
Who had but been a traitor, while a wife
Attends with bloated handkerchief, and wipes
The dew-drops from her cheeks! Piteous indeed!

PUTUS.

Ev'n so, thou'd we succeed, against his will,
'Twill be just as you say. With tender heart
He'll eye the fond forsaken wife, and shed
A tear of sympathy. Dost thou not scorn
Such slipp'ry spirits that fly away in vapour?
Bilettus, we will go—

BILETTUS.

Putus, no twattling of a love-sick girl,
Nor dying pit-pat of a tender stomach,
Shall steal our purpose from us! Let him go
And breathe himself away on Love's soft lap!

TRITARIUS.

Why? must the least suspicion of mistake
On no account be urg'd? Directly he
Who doubts, or hints a doubt, must he be dubb'd
Unhearty in the cause? Fabius, you've heard,
Was not so much unlike a man who doubts,
Had he run heedless on thro' thick and thin,
And scorn'd to stoop to reason like the rest,
Who hold that fearless folk do all the work,
I trow affairs had worn another face!

BILETTUS.

Fabius? Did Fabius ever head a party
Prepar'd t'abash the growth of civil discord?

TRITARIUS.

I own such instance far out-runs the subject.
Vespasian's bidding we are bound to heed;
But much I fear me more than that we boast not.

No love of country that impells——no rights
 To be redress'd !——A daring foe repuls'd
 And driv'n to seek for safety far from Rome
 Exalted Fabius' name. But is there aught
 In that that's like the hunting one poor Gaul
 To rob him where we can, and rob him of
 The day-light, which already's not his own ?

PUTUS.

A pretty figur'd argument !
 And wilt not thou prevent such wicked work ?
 Go tell the good Sabinus to take care !
 Go warn him there are men of ill intent
 That plot against him !——I foretold at first
 His wat'ry temper wou'd run out ere long.

TRITARIUS.

The temper thou hast nam'd so (once for all
 I tell thee) is a temper ill adapted
 To bear with sycophants.

BILETTUS.

Hence ! hasty youth, and by thyself reflect
 Who 'twas admitted thee to bear a part
 In this design.

PUTUS.

But tho' his squeamish virtue feign to start,
 Shou'd we succeed, believe me not again,
 If he be not the first to stretch a palm
 For what 'tis likely he will earn so well !——
 I brook not such half-hearts colleagu'd with me,
 And by Vespasian feel a strong impulse

To rid me of thy company for ever !

TRITARIUS. *[Putting his hand to his sword,*

Come on ! and thou Bilettus, pray attend.

Cou'd'st thou dispatch him with less noise ? Come on !

BILETTUS *interposing.*

Forbear !

PUTUS.

I'd know the issue of his affectation.

TRITARIUS,

Of affectation ? say'st thou ?

When that fam'd Scythian, who had led so long

A troop of robbers, fell beneath this arm ;

Did his indignant self-belying soul

Discover affectation in the blow ?

Or, was he half the hypocrite this hour

Shall free the world from ? *[A messenger arrives,*

What wou'd'st thou ?

BILETTUS.

Speak, messenger, if such thou art ! Thou com'st

In such a stormy season as requires

A lenitive. And may thy words appease

This ill-tim'd passion !

PUTUS.

That tender frame that only can digest

The whey of virtue ! that wise reasoner,

To ape an enterprize !

BILETTUS,

Peace ! Peace !

MESSENGER *looking amazed.*

I'm bid to bear this letter to Tritarius,
To him that in the world has not his like——

BILETTUS.

And so some maiden in the whimsies gave
This order and this letter, when the moon
Close-leagu'd with May had set her blood afloat !

[Takes the letter and gives it to Tritarius.]

MESSENGER.

I pray thee mock not——and besides she said,
Twice calling after me, take care he frown not.

TRITARIUS.

As how ? Tritarius cannot frown on thee,
Mean as his business is, he scorns to scare
The wits of slaves. *[Reads it.]* *[Exit Messenger.]*

BILETTUS.

In anger now ?

TRITARIUS.

But with myself. I never was with thee,
Nor thee. I've gone too far for good. No more
My gen'rous character fits easy on me.
'Tis dang'rous to dissemble. To give way
To the least motion of such ill advice
Is the wild wand'ring of good nature prompt
To lead us to our ruin. When we first
Begin to dabble at the water's edge
We think of resting there. Soon, very soon,
Grown confident, we plunge into the stream
To be but borne away !——

PUTUS.

You've heard Philosophers harangue ; declare,
 Will moralizing fill an empty pocket ?
 Can all this reas'ning lead us to the cave
 Where lurks Sabinus ? Give us then the clue
 Of long conducting wisdom to unwind !

TRITARIUS.

To stop thy rail'ry, there are ways and means
 To do the thing thy sordid soul desires.
 No cave's to be explor'd, as was before
 Well pointed out.

BILETTUS.

Discover.

TRITARIUS.

Let us retire,

[*Exeunt.*]

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## S C E N E III.

SABINUS *armed.* EPPONINA.

SABINUS.

Such glowing joys strike thro' my frame, I feel  
 Past days come back, and, with redoubled lustre  
 Lead on to conquest ! To become these arms  
 I must be valiant !——Like a bow unbent  
 I have lain by ; now fresh as morning beams  
 That leap o'er hills and mountains with a bound,  
 I seem to tread Rome's victories beneath me.

Such strong forebodings filling up my veins,  
Ne'er rose from nothing.

EPPONINA.

I had my fears, but thou hast charm'd them down.—  
Be what it will that kindles thee to glory,  
I find its force. And if it be ambition,  
I own it fires me too. Thy warmth no more  
Is thine than mine. I will be equal there,  
And thirst, as thou dost, for the cup of fame!

SABINUS.

Enchanting woman!

EPPONINA.

It looks so natural, such an easy thing  
To long for liberty, none needs a hint  
To be a man that was a man before.  
Scarce those that swear obedience to thy steps  
Know who inspir'd them to be free!  
'Tis best, Sabinus, that they thus believe  
Their heat was voluntary and their own.—  
How little does Vespasian dream that now  
The seeds of that conspiracy, that he  
May-hap has heard of, cou'd by thee be sown!

SABINUS.

No; such suggestions cannot rise at Rome.  
Were pleasure wanting with oblivion's hand  
To blot out all rememb'rance there of me;  
Is it to be believ'd that kingly cares  
Are unimportant? and so light the load  
Of government, that he who bears it up  
Reflects on rivals by all else forgot?



## EPPONINA.

Not so forgot. Those bloody hands that once  
Beset our dwelling, sent to seek thee out,  
And finding thee to kill, had they grop'd out  
Yon subterraneous house of love——  
Oh! let unwelcome fears be most unlike  
Unwelcome news that oft is found too true!

## SABINUS.

But why, my Epponina, thus relapse  
Into the bitterness of vain suspicion?  
While thus I hold thee, let the realm belong  
To whom it will, while Epponina's mine,  
I still am absolute in endless love!  
The selfish, bookish, such may be afraid——

## EPPONINA.

Whom fortune buoys in air may fear a fall,  
If once the bladder bursts that holds them up.— [*pauses.*]  
Can we not rise to ruin? Few our friends!  
Will fortune surely smile to-morrow?——  
Full of wise saws a cringing stranger came.  
Right worthy of respect he seem'd at first,  
As who was virtue's friend. But in departing  
Methought he almost dropt a borrow'd form  
For one detestable.—How hateful is  
The coward soul, that basely sculks behind  
A few fair words, afraid to shew its face!  
I've since suppos'd what subtlety may do  
It has not done. —

SABINUS.

Ere one more moon shall wane, despair shall seize  
Vespasian vanquish'd ! he shall rue the day  
He saw Rome's sceptre fill his impious hand !  
Not Cenis then (spite of her sparkling wit,  
Her vaunted counsels and her manly sense)  
'Tis not in her nor tribes of concubines,  
To fix within his mind a faint idea  
Of our pure flame, that long in a dark cave  
Hath sham'd the untoward heat that kings call love !  
But he shall die in earnest.

EPPONINA.

Hence ! hence ! ye hard supposes.——  
If craft can never steal Sabinus from me  
I bid defiance. But for that I fear'd.  
Ah ! had he brought by artful roundabouts  
The secret of the cave from out these lips——  
But if it be of no import——

SABINUS.

For caves I heed not—I will shake yon throne.

EPPONINA.

Stay ! O stay !  
A minute let me bind thee to my heart,  
And breathe my warmest, my most fond farewell,  
Within thy arms. *[They embrace.]*

Enter DAMA.

By Lentus and by Riblius I am sent,  
To seek Sabinus out, at all events.

K

## EPPONINA.

Do knaves beset us? tell!

## DAMA.

Licinius had approach'd and pitch'd his camp  
But a few furlongs off. His weary troops  
Were weak and listless. Riblius' fire run on  
Thro' all our little band, while Lentus schem'd  
To make its courage end in conquering.  
His plan was feasible. They liv'd afresh,  
Rear'd up their light array, like vultures sprung,  
Surpriz'd their en'mies heartless unawares,  
Attack'd, subdu'd, and ended all they met.  
Still shout the victors. Freedom rends the air.  
No neighb'ring hind that hears how heartily  
Sweet liberty resounds, wou'd be Vespasian.—  
They call on thee. Ev'n as I run along,  
A hundred times the sounding of Sabinus  
O'ertook my steps.—

A guard approaches. To conduct them hither,  
I go. Meantime farewell! hid in the fields,  
There may be fly deceivers. Wait thou here. [Exit

## SABINUS.

One minute makes me with them! —  
How cou'd I linger here? 'twas base! I'll rise,  
I'll to them fly, let force and fraud together  
Try to oppose me! —



## S C E N E IV.

*Enter BILETTUS, and PUTUS, TRITARIUS following.*

BILETTUS.

Sabinus, you will pardon us who wake  
You and your Epponina, from your dreams  
Of conjugal content, if such you have.

SABINUS.

Explain!

BILETTUS.

No need t'explain!—you are at last found out.  
'Twas long believ'd that you had bravely plung'd  
Your dagger where you might. But time, Sabinus,  
Time has discover'd you had not the spirit.  
You owe to justice, and must pay the debt.

SABINUS.

To justice?—

BILETTUS.

'Tis not a time for argument. Away!  
We but dispatch the orders of Vespasian,  
And doing that befriend the state, that calls  
For expedition in destroying traitors.  
Away! a prison waits.

SABINUS.

A prison waits!—Vile raving dotard, know  
That liberty's triumphant! back this instant!  
Thou and thy hated company may fall  
Into the hands of men——Men that ill bear  
The foes of freedom. Quick! retire!

BILETTUS.

Thou art the dotard! True, the puny band  
Thou call'st, may-hap an army had the best.  
Their few opposers were discomfited  
At the first onset.  
But could'st thou think, Sabinus, that to fright  
A troop, worn out with a long sleepless march,  
With the few dastard dwellers in one village,  
Was what wou'd lead thee on to Rome? I tell thee  
That ere an hour be gone, upon this plain  
Shouts of Vespasian's name will shake the air:  
He at the head of legions never scar'd  
By madmens boasts, of thousands undismay'd  
By half a handful of ill-order'd peasants,  
Scours all the country!——As it likes thee, term  
This information!——but I favour thee,  
Who strive to make thee sober.——

SABINUS.

But first, thou dastard blood-hunter, beware!  
Before Vespasian tread the virtuous down,  
Before the valiant sink, one of their foes  
Shall fall!——

This arm, that has perform'd as great a feat  
As splitting twenty villains souls in sunder,

Shall send that spark of interested cunning ———

Come on!—but fly! my Epponina, fly!

This stroke shall be the purchase of thy peace!

Fly, fly! but hope the while!

[*They fight, Epponina faints, Bilettus seems to be worsted,*

TRITARIUS *rushing in.*

O spare thy hand! Sabinus, spare thy hand!

For I who must admire thee, seek thy fall.

Alas! that I am doom'd to this curst deed!

To save a sneaking mongrel of a man

From suff'ring as he ought!

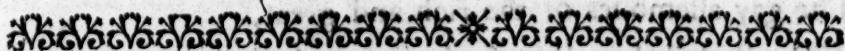
SABINUS.

Ha! who art thou that in the guise of friendship  
Wou'd'st tear the monster from my arm? Avaunt!

TRITARIUS.

A fatal bargain binds me! stay thy hand!  
I shudder thus to seize thee——stay thy hand!

[*They overpower him; Bilettus and Putus carry  
off Sabinus.*



## SCENE V.

TRITARIUS and EPPONINA.

TRITARIUS.

Why flow these tears? were e'er these eyes design'd  
To be the inlets to an aching heart?

O Epponina ———



*EPPONINA raising her head.*

Sabinus, my Sabinus ! never more  
Must I, but with unutterable pain,  
Behold that face a cave has kept for me ?——  
Where not the sun that looks on all the world  
E'er sent a ray, where human foot scarce trod,  
And where suspicion's self cou'd ne'er suppose  
The sacrilegious lurk'd, cou'd there the king  
Surprize Sabinus ? ——

TRITARIUS.

O Epponina ——

EPPONINA.

Why still didst thou not stay, where bliss abode,  
To cheer life's latest pangs ?  
There fortune, that delights to level down,  
The lofty summit of aspiring pride,  
Had spar'd the peaceful husband !  
He knew—ah ! knew he not how love transforms  
A cottage to a court ?  
Were we not happy ? can the costly pomp,  
The gay assemblies of the rich and great,  
With all their haughtiness, be more than happy ?——  
For thou demanding why my tears descend,  
Hast thou so thriftily dealt out my woes,  
That thus to mock me might torment me ?  
Or, know'st thou not 'twas thou thyself undid me ?  
Go ask the rattling show'rs of winter's rain,  
Why they shou'd beat thy face amid thy march,  
And why they patter on the marly path !  
Go (with more shadow of similitude)

Question th' unhappy, when the furies wring  
Their entrails, why they bellow their despair !

TRITARIUS.

But that thy pains enlarge their bounds the more  
By this recital, hours and days I'd wait  
To catch thy piercing words !  
The tender passions from thy tongue destroy me !  
O let me study some soft fanning phrase,  
That might, if possible, allay this heat  
That melts thy soul !

EPPONINA.

No, quiet dwells no longer in yon cave.  
Cou'd sighs, cou'd suff'rings bring him to mine arms,  
At ev'ry vein I'd bleed affection for him !

TRITARIUS.

Bid as thou wilt, and if by any means  
I may assist ———

EPPONINA.

Wou'd'st thou assist me, bring Sabinus back !  
Go rend him from that flatt'rer's fatal hand ! [Exit.



## SCENE VI.

TRITARIUS *solus*.

Wou'd'st thou assist me, bring Sabinus back !  
Go rend him from that flatt'rer's fatal hand !——  
How hard to lay Sabinus in oblivion !

Yet were he once at quiet in his urn,  
 He cou'd not then disturb a lover's hopes.—  
 I fear he wou'd——

Then wou'd the days and nights be but a sigh,  
 A lasting sigh for her Sabinus lost!

Wou'd she not pore for peace in wisdom's leaves,  
 And con long precepts, foes to youth and love?  
 If e'er she once, amid her better work,  
 Bestow'd a thought on me, this day wou'd bring  
 Me to her mind—to be the more abhorr'd!

To languish out a life of hopeless love,  
 Devoted to destruction by the pray'rs  
 That widow'd beauty breathes in full revenge——  
 Cou'd this be borne?

Sabinus must be sav'd—or I be lost!

Then 'twere most barb'rous to let go such worth;  
 To leave a brave man beat by fortune's rage——  
 T'endure the idea of such wickedness  
 Is sharp as death!

I had resolv'd, but feel my breast recoil.—

But then again, while her Sabinus breathes,  
 Will Epponina falsify her vow?

She will not, cannot. Shou'd I hope for that?

Yes; I must wish a thousand things besides,  
 That lib'ral hearts abhor, but such as lovers

Learn to accomplish, while they spurn the laws  
 Of truth and justice!—I must make one more  
 Of that unthinking band that dares despise  
 What honour, equity, and virtue say.

These in unequal strife wou'd fain forbid

What fools and knaves and cowards long t'obt'  
 But 'tis not in me to be vile as they!——



Rise, honest nature, and redeem my soul ;  
 Bear down the resolutions of my love,  
 And blot out one great error !——  
 Shall virtue conquer, or my passions flame  
 Fresh at her presence ? Not to sob and sigh,  
 And pant for smiles repaid, 'tis innocence  
 Gives bliss to lovers !—But, avenging Gods,  
 Does your perfection dwell in man ?——  
 Of beauty's pow'r I'd own'd such truths before  
 As none deny ; but Epponina pass'd—  
 (Before 'twas but mere notion !) thro' my heart  
 Her figure went.—Her conversation drove  
 All words before it. Soon her goodness damp'd  
 My half-born hopes. For she is virtue all,  
 Virtue that young and old must equally  
 Adore ! Sabinus ! thou shalt surely die——  
 Or live—alas ! I know not which. 'Tis fixt——  
 Vespasian may be mov'd——but to what end ?  
 To kill or cure me ? Ah ! Tritarius, thou  
 Art in the dark ! Vibrating here and there  
 My bosom beats for reason's aid in vain !  
 Reason is madness, when one's being hangs  
 On passion ! truth—aye right and wrong, give way !  
 Let Epponina to my love be won !  
 Alas ! the brave Sabinus—— *[Exit.]*



## A C T V.

## S C E N E I.

EPPONINA, *and her two children.* SABERA.

SABERA.

**C**OU'D it be otherwise? your fame for prudence  
 Had made the thing itself of no account?  
 Some other untaught woman, less severe,  
 Less rig'rous in her wisdom might have thought  
 It not unreasonable to restrain,  
 In modest bounds, her fondness for a man! —  
 Risque your own peace for disobedient man!

EPPONINA.

Surely Sabinus was not one of those  
 That disobedient any way agrees to.

SABERA.

A just man! that in lawless arms oppos'd  
 The great Vespasian!

EPPONINA.

Why? that thou meanest to withhold thy kind  
 Condolence from me, is mysterious. Say,  
 How 'gainst Vespasian rais'd he lawless arms?  
 Say, when Rome's crown was laid aside, unwore;

Better might it become Vespasian's head  
 Than my Sabinus' ? Success in high or low  
 Bespeaks not always merit in proportion.  
 Hast thou not noted men with mighty names,  
 Strangers to the least spark of gen'rous flame,  
 That lighted my Sabinus ?

SABERA.

Such close-fix'd arguments wou'd make one guess,  
 The late half hour was but a midnight's fable !  
 This love that wives so boast of to their lords,  
 This sorrow for their suff'rings (this I've noted)  
 Is not to last for ages !——

EPPONINA.

True, Heav'n has heard my pray'rs, and lent me aid,  
 In struggling to resign what must be lost.  
 Propitious Gods ! I am not now so void  
 Of reason to restrain the rage of love,  
 But may'st thou, Sabera, be still undoom'd  
 To feel such sorrow as this breast must bear !

~~CHORUS OF ATTENDANTS~~

## SCENE II.

*Enter a MESSENGER.*

MESSENGER.

My master's orders were to fly to thee,  
 And to make known the emperor's approach.——

EPPONINA.

Speak on. Who art thou ? What unheard-of dream  
 Hath got possession of thee ?



MESSENGER.

My master is not unreported of  
In great Vespasian's wars. For scarce a soldier  
But has been witness of his daring arm.—  
Indeed I thought him little mov'd with beauty,  
Before he talk'd in such a random sort.—

EPPONINA.

But if thou can'st be pertinent and short,  
Inform me clearly what this errand means.

MESSENGER.

Vespasian's enemies are crush'd and quiet.  
Since that, he has resolv'd on combating  
The minds of Gauls, and win them to his rule  
By gentle means. Titus continues fix'd,  
And swerves not from his father. While I speak,  
Behold! the emperor comes on, comes hither.  
This is mine errand. Why Tritarius sent me,  
Or any here shou'd be concern'd to know  
His royal willingness to hear petitions,  
Is more than my pretensions to unfold!

SABERA.

Not more than mine!—For with Vespasian comes  
Tritarius. Epponina, heed this well.  
'Twill help thee to make out so kind a message.  
Ungrateful monster! Were it hard to know  
What mov'd his gracious embassy!

EPPONINA.

I do remember that Tritarius made  
A tender of his service, which with flight,

Nay, with disdain, I heard. Perhaps he meant  
And may do good.—

*Messenger departing.*

If questions thou'd be ask'd, he bade me give  
This paper seal'd in such peculiar guise;  
Which might do more than many a speech of mine,  
T'explain what much concern'd him.— [Exit.



### S C E N E III.

*EPPONINA after reading.*

Heav'ns! yet more heavy falls your anger down  
On Epponina? Is it, thus the good  
Endure the frowns, the favours of the bad?  
Or, whence this offer of his hated service?  
Its very terms, its nature carries in it,  
Whatever is destructive and detested!

*SABERA.*

What? still on the same string of wild mistake?  
Be stout, and face this dang'rous dreaded man!  
Or, does Tritarius harbour in his breast  
A passion strong enough to shake thy peace?  
May be the beauty that has made him rave  
Is not of such a fatal sort to fright  
Thee with eternity of murder'd lovers!

*EPPONINA.*

My charms! ye heav'ns! my beauty! Did I then  
With study'd labour seek the way to fame  
By shewing this pale face?—Sabinus, tell!

EPONINA.

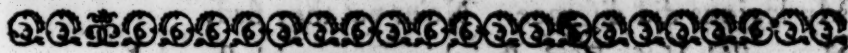
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SCENE IV.

**EPPONINA** *sola.*

But disquisition cannot be indulg'd,  
Or at another time this sudden change  
Had been a serious matter to make out.——  
O tongue, if ever thou could'st fondly run,  
In manner not unwelcome to Sabinus ;  
If e'er persuasion pleaded in my eyes ;  
If e'er my face had features not unwill'd ;  
O tongue and eyes and face your force collect,  
And, wou'd ye be ambitious to excel,  
Attack the fierce Vespasian ! let him feel,  
Since ne'er he felt before, what wives lament  
That lose —— [weeps.  
Oh ! if there be but rhet'ric in a tear,  
Pour plenteous down !——ye weak young orators,  
With pray'rs and tears and native plainness talk !  
[amber children.  
Your honest looks will make a stone relent ! [weeps.





## SCENE V.

*Enter VESPASIAN, TRITARIUS, &c.*

VESPASIAN.

A shrewd contrivance ! as 'tis told to me,  
It was the project of his hapless wife.  
Hid under ground nine twelvemonths safe he lay,  
And laugh'd at those that cou'd believe him dead.  
At last rebellion into light is borne  
By my Tritarius' hand.——

TRITARIUS.

The Gods, great emp'ror, shield thy righteous pow'r  
With arms unwear'd, and produce a proof  
How they befriend thee, since they let thee see  
Sabinus.——

EPPONINA.

The Gods, great emp'ror, when they set up kings,  
Ordain defenders of the common weal.  
I trust in all the world there is not found  
A crown bestow'd by Jove's unerring hand,  
Unearn'd by virtue.——

VESPASIAN.

Mean what thou wilt, I trust the crown on me  
Has not been wanton'd uselessly away.  
Germania trembles, Nor do Britons doubt  
(Britons that banish ev'ry foe but Rome)

My daring foul ! Ne'er yet the Roman name  
My legions did disgrace. Ne'er yet they fled,  
Nor veil'd Vespasian's shrinking arm with shame !

EPPONINA.

Nine tedious years have run their gloomy round,  
Since thy successes first have fill'd mine ears.—  
Had but the pow'rs of peace and war thought fit,  
Thou might'st have been less brave !

VESPASIAN.

Did e'er my courage rise to brutal rage,  
Or wear out the emotions of a man ?  
Have not the people found a father in me,  
Who with a cautious hand have borne away  
What was their curse, the means of luxury ?

EPPONINA.

But sure within that bosom there must bloom  
Some milder virtue still !—Sure to forbear  
Th' extremity of rigid Roman laws,  
When innocence is a petitioner,  
Were worthy pow'r and kingly clemency !

VESPASIAN.

To leave the rigour of the Roman laws,  
Were but to go beside the rightful track  
Mark'd out by justice !—With long labour, I  
Have found out each defect in Rome's decrees,  
And carefully supply'd it.—

EPPONINA.

O justice ! how implacable thy rage !  
That, from the pangs of family and friends,

Spares not to pluck the least offender off,  
 Ere he be wise to think ! To live's to err.  
 Must one poor well-intended error end  
 But in the sharpest pains the righteous laws  
 Reserve for heads grown hoary in their guilt ?  
 Is he, who from his early youth began  
 To tread the desolating paths of vice,  
 Nor ceas'd to wander, till his wand'rings drew  
 Thousands of gazers on to gain the hills  
 Himself had dar'd to tread ;  
 He, who committing first some paultry crime  
 Is led with eagerness from link to link  
 To the last labour of impiety :  
 Is he, Vespasian, proper to compare  
 With the submitting open honest man,  
 That to be social, once was made to sin ;  
 But soon reflecting on the sad compliance  
 Starts back with horror, and is left alone ?

## VESPASIAN.

What wou'd these questions have, that serve themselves  
 Themselves to answer ?

## EPPONINA.

Once this poor quiv'ring form that bends before thee  
 In other plight contain'd a mind at ease,  
 Made happy with — [*weeps.*] Forgive me, monarch !  
 So pleasing passes by the dear idea,  
 I love, I must lament him !

M



VESPASIAN.

What wou'd'st thou, woman?

EPPONINA.

Let not Vespasian be beneath himself!——

Oh! do not, monarch, mock a woman's pain!

Who oft have struggl'd to be more than woman,

But burning ills that seem'd long since subdu'd

Begin to flame afresh, and Epponina

Is melted down to softness, sorrow, woman!——

Cou'd he but be a stranger to the storm

That beats within my breast, his noble spirit

Shou'd then of half its weight have certain ease.

But well he knows that (what all else before

Had try'd to bring about) his new mishap

Swells and inflames me more than flesh can bear!

VESPASIAN.

What He is this that troubles thee?

EPPONINA.

Shall ignominy seize Sabinus' name?

Shall he be dragg'd——shall needy wretches mock

His dying sorrows?——Earth's worst villainy

Spurr'd on by sharpest penury and pow'r——

Can that earn bread by braving heav'n and hell?——

But now the wickedness of man's mature,

This iron age has swept all virtuous fears

From off earth's surface: Or no ruler's word

Had awe enough to compass such a crime!——

Rewards or Threat'nings, what can they contain?

What is there kings can give, or subjects take

On this condition ? To expose the brave !——  
Infernal monsters ! to expose the brave——  
For money !——Rocks and mountains open wide,  
And crush their kindred entrails !——

VESPASIAN.

Dar'ft thou arraign the management of those,  
Who, at my bidding, seiz'd a man grown old  
In his rebellion ?

EPPONINA.

Didst thou well know that man grown old in wisdom,  
Much wou'd'ft thou wonder that thy royal word  
Had been obey'd !

VESPASIAN.

No more !

EPPONINA.

Hear me one moment ; and consider this,  
Kings are the deputies of heav'nly Jove,  
Who hates oppression ! Think, with vengeful eye  
He looks on those that hate not cruelty !  
Are there, that deal unduly their rev'enge  
On th' unhappy ? Still, his bolts delight  
To rend their iron bowels !

VESPASIAN.

What daring madness blinds thee to forget,  
That he thou thus presumest to reprove,  
Is Rome's Vespasian ? Know, that at my nod  
Resistless pow'r pays back such bold affronts !

## EPPONINA.

That thou art the most mighty emperor  
 Of vengeful Rome, I need not be inform'd.  
 Do but in greatness then her kings delight?  
 Is that their poor sole privilege? Nor claim  
 They aught but rage and terror? Human kind  
 Are link'd together all. Nature's strong chain  
 Makes all alike. Acknowledge this, thou man!  
 No grandeur clears a mortal from the lot  
 Of his mortality.——

Is there an emperor, whose lofty throne  
 The low and needy rear'd? he must remember  
 To mitigate their ills. They were his friends!

## VESPASIAN.

What friends have emperors? What friends beside  
 But you, ye immortal Gods, have kings of Rome?

## EPPONINA.

Yet pardon, prince, a feeble woman's warmth;  
 Whose passions drive discretion from my tongue!——  
 Cou'd any other feel my wrongs!——alas!  
 I cannot call my own resolves my own!  
 The moment that the most requires my best,  
 Most chosen words and gestures, sees me lost,  
 Forgetful of myself and Him I sue to;  
 Sees me intrude with obstinacy on  
 The thorns of majesty, and blindly pull  
 More sudden vengeance on my foolish head!

## VESPASIAN.

Whate'er the burden of this bus'ness be,  
 I long to hear it. Nor am yet a king



That do not love sincerity, tho' drest  
In garb not most becoming !

## EPPONINA.

Step forth, my children.—'Tis impossible——  
Begin, my babes—my dearest babes, begin !  
No mother can. But ye were born to plead  
Your mother's, father's cause——rear'd from the womb  
In a dark cave, where never midwife's care  
Nor nurse's came——far from the curse of day  
Where pride nor pity dwell.——Much ye admire  
The wond'rous sun that first this morn ye saw !  
Lisp out the little ye have heard and seen !——  
Oft by the twinkling lamp did ye believe  
Your den a world—your infant prate grew big,  
And ye were vain like men ! [*They smile.*]

## VESPASIAN.

Blest state ! when not a blot of vice deforms  
The mind !——

## EPPONINA.

Must ye be taught what mis'ry means ?  
Soon violence and fraud may seize upon you,  
Soon tyranny may tread your spirits down,  
Soon ye may mourn the mischiefs of oppression !  
As yet ye scarce conceive that malice dwells  
In mortal bosoms ! No malevolence  
Ye borrow from the manners of your father !  
He did not drive you where a tainted converse  
Brings to the temper pestilence and plague !  
Yet is your honest ign'rance safe and sound ;

For hitherto Sabinus was a father !——  
But oh ! expos'd to autumn's killing winds  
The fairest flow'r that summer ever saw  
Shrinks at the blast and drops its smitten head !——  
Who, who, my babes, shall shield you ; who protect  
Your innocent souls to the wide world betray'd ?  
There pride, and there ambition glitters ! there  
The dragons of an ill example rove  
At random to devour ! What dangers wait,  
What ruin falls not on an orphan's head ?  
Earth teems with wickedness——and can I bear  
(I tremble and turn raving) bear to think  
That ye, who nurtur'd in a cave nine years  
By me your mother, who for you o'ercame  
The pangs of nature without other's aid,  
And brought you forth without one groan of grief——  
That ye, who long were happy in mishap,  
Long cherish'd with the fondness of a father ;  
Safe from the terrors of brow-beating pride,  
The fop's vain pranks, the scoffer's wanton sneers,  
From lying, fraud, and the long list behind——  
That ye be turn'd to wander in a world  
Where none advises, none administers  
An helping hand ?  
While native rectitude shall bid you heed  
The wrecks that wickedness and folly make ;  
Will there be wanting monsters to step in  
And steal the morsel from your mouths ?——  
Now your young virtues had begun to bloom ;  
And must they fall at once for ever ?  
Comes on the day ye must forget your father,

And ye be wretched, ye be wicked ? Oh !  
 He was not wicked ! Had he never been,  
 By some peculiar fury of his fate,  
 Encompass'd with the tortures of the Hero ;  
 Who had been happier, who so well contemn'd  
 Infernal malice ? Shall he not survive  
 In these his children ? All ye mighty Gods,  
 Have mercy on my offspring ! let me hope  
 Your representative will not forget  
 A king shou'd save the weak and innocent !  
 O wou'd Vespasian pity !——Is he fled,  
 Your peace and comfort ? Poor weak things, ye weep ;  
 Nor know for what !——No fun'ral duties paid  
 Before your eyes have warn'd you of the way  
 All men must tread !——Ye've heard no piercing cries,  
 That harden'd guilt extorts from helpless virtue,  
 When the last dregs of life are draining off !  
 And can ye be afraid of what befall  
 Your father ?——Let them pour and pour upon me  
 The wrongs, the vengeance, all the bitter woes  
 That my Sabinus——But, O Gods ! I cannot——  
 None can survive it !——husband ! children ! ah !

[Swoons. Is carried off.]

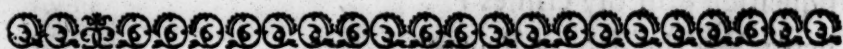




For had they curst me to be king of Rome,  
I cou'd have felt no sorrow for Sabinus!—

VEASPASIAN.

He shall die.—



## S C E N E VII.

*Enter EPPONINA.*

EPPONINA.

Well! be it so; and glut thy greedy pride  
With the best blood of Gaul!—What tho' I su'd  
For my Sabinus, know, thou cruel king!  
That I contemn such boons as thou can'st give,  
And scorn thy vengeance!  
Nine years beneath a cov'ring of hard earth,  
Blest to be partner in Sabinus' pray'rs,  
Has Epponina utter'd no request  
For vain unbending roy'lty to refuse;  
Smil'd at the thought of thy magnificence,  
And dar'd to pity thee!——Unmeaning man!  
Wou'dst thou be great indeed, learn to be good.  
With virtue beggars live in lasting joy:  
Without it emperors are wretched things!  
Think not to leave a widow long unblest'd  
To muse, and weep, and mourn, and wish in vain,  
For her Sabinus——No, I'll lead him on—  
Stay, dear Sabinus, let me go before—  
And on the borders of those blissful plains

N

Reserv'd for heroes, I will wait for thee !——  
But haste, Vespasian, let him quickly come !  
Blunt in thy breast the edge of ev'ry law  
The Gods wou'd guard us with ! bar conscience out !  
Break down the bounds of good and ill ; and range  
Unquestion'd in thy crimes !  
Then when the date of Royalty is o'er,  
When this and that in virtue's paths shall fall,  
The sad examples of a tyrant's hate——  
When Nero shall become an honest name,  
And children tremble when they talk of thee——  
When on a sudden all the realm shall rise  
To pay thee back thine own : Seize then a sword,  
And, with the fearless peace and bold contempt  
That hold and lull Sabinus' soul, look down  
With unconcern, on earth, and hell, and Rome,  
Combin'd to move thee ! Deeply plunge the point !  
Thus die ! and thus defy them !

[Stabs herself.

[*Exeunt omnes.*





## E P I L O G U E.

In the CHARACTER of a FRUIT-WOMAN.

**I** Left yon gallery, for I saw you weep,  
And come to advise you, ere you go to sleep.

Meek wives, and meeker misses, ponder well !  
When ye shall hear the sad funereal knel,  
In time to come, for your dear husbands dead ;  
And Epponina comes into your head :  
I wou'd not have you hang, or stab, or drown,  
To raise yourselves in tragical renown.

Put a warm husband, and cold grave together,  
Joy now, and fame to come——and chuse ye whether !

My present mate is no such tyrannizer,  
To fill an evening-post, or advertiser.  
Yet is he full as precious as my other,  
Who rag'd, and fir'd, and fought, and made such pother.  
He fell in Flanders——let him lie and rot !  
A peaceful prudent Jewel now I've got ;  
Who, while he's good, and loves his lawful wife,  
E'en let him hate French guns and Indian knife !  
He'll not be talk'd of, like the martial fort  
That murder——but he'll live the longer for't.  
And, when he dies, I'll bear it as I can ;  
Another's just as good——a man's a man.

EPILOGUE

In the CHARACTER of a TRUTH-WOMAN.

I feel you galling, for I saw you weep,  
And come to advise you, ere you go to sleep.

Meek wives, and nice, or mild, or ponder well,  
When ye shall hear the lady's counsel kneel;  
In time to come, for your fair husbands' sake;

And Epiphania comes to you, I think;  
I would not have you in a single wink  
To raise yourselves in angry mood.

Put a warm husband, and cold grave together;  
Joy now, and shame to come — and change ye whether!

My prudent mate is no such thing;  
To fill an evening's talk, or a day's thing,  
Yet is he still as various as the wind;  
With the night, and the day, and the wind, and the rain.

He'll tell in a hundred ways — let him be mad or not;  
A careless prudent Jew, now I've got

Who, while he's good, and honest, and lawful, will  
In his heart have French, Spanish, and Italian still.

He'll not be call'd of, the more manly he is;  
That number — the more he'll live the longer he is.

And, when he dies, he'll be a man;  
Another's just as good — a man, a man.

